Twinkle oh-you Little Star!

Nur Syarfa Aqilah Mohammed Akhiar
(Malaysia)
This is a story about a girl. A girl who is now stronger than the Hulk, wiser than Gandhi and much more mature than her older sister. Okay, maybe not. But she is, for sure, a changed person.

August 11 is indeed a very special date. In 2008, it marks the date she began her sojourn to the land of the free. She began her journey to the United States. Oh boy, little did she know what hold in stores for her. She came as the over-confident girl who had everything going on for her back home, in the lovely Malaysia. Loved by the society, great family, superb result, a million friends, money, and of course, the oh-you’re-so-lucky-to-have-him-boyfriend. You name it, she had it all.

Blinded by all the glitters, she never once thought of the important saying that says “All good things come to an end”. Yes, she was foolish. Maybe she still is, but at least thinks a little more deeply nowadays.

Setting foot on the earth of the melting pot of the world, she smiled. But as days go by, she began to realize things weren’t as easy as they were back home. But she coped with them. She knew things were not going to be easy. To blend in with the culture, to speak a different language most of the time, to make new friends, to keep in touch with all her loved ones, and most importantly, to put on her confident mask, a mask that says she wasn’t scared. “Oh who? That girl? She’ll be okay. We know her way, she’ll fit in perfectly.”

And yes, she tried. So hard. And one by one, little by little, her sparkle began to fade.

Being a Muslim, the first biggest challenge she faced was prayer. She felt like crying, once, when a person walked into the door; smack right in the middle when she was praying on her beloved prayer mat. Soon she got over it and realized communication was the key for solving these sorts of sensitive issues.

And then the Holy month of Ramadhan came. She had to break her fast at the dorm’s cafeteria. Alone. Who, in America, eats DINNER after 8.00 pm? Not many, I tell you. There weren’t even real
food left. There were pizzas and cereals. After not eating for the whole day, and all you got is 2 slices of pizza, I don’t think you’ll be a very happy person, will you? Well we’re lucky that she wasn’t a picky eater. She puts on a happy face in front of her friends, her family and her soon-to-be ex-boyfriend. She said it was okay. She said she was happy. “No, I did not eat alone. I ate with friends. They waited for me”. Not.

Friends. Ahh the people, that makes the world a more bearable place to live in. She was lucky to have a great support system. Even though her best friends are far away in Pennsylvania and Indiana, they constantly give each other’s shoulders to hang on to. But hold on, we should be talking about her American friends’ right? Her friends in MSU? And all her new international friends that she met along the way? Being the social butterfly that she is, she never really had problems making friends. Heck, she had tons of friends. She still does. But making friends, and actually being in a circle of friends, are two different things no? Maybe it was just her luck, that people she crossed path with, are all part of a clique. And yes, she felt out of place. She wanted to run away and cry.

But then she got a job offer! Her first job, ever. Being from a fairly off family, she never needed to work. But she insists on getting the experience here. Plus, American Dollars are 4 times higher than the currency back in home. As tiring as she discovered it was, she enjoyed it. A welcoming ambience, amalgamated with great co-workers, it managed to lift her spirit up by an inch. Oh but heads up, another blast is coming your way. Some confusing misunderstanding happens, and she had to move out of her room. In just one day. A girl does have a lot of stuff. She was lucky to not break her back bones that night. Being part of the minority, you don’t really want to create a scene. So you suck it up all inside. That is exactly what she did. And it hurts more than ever.

To add lemon zest to the wound, she found out her so-called prince charming stabbed her from the back, with another damsel in distress from far far away. Oh believe me, she wished she was Snow White who swallowed the whole apple, so she could just say goodbye to the world.
The freezing weather did not help one bit. The beautiful droplets of snow turned out to be daggers in disguise. She was used to waking up and seeing the bright sun every morning; and opening her eyes to a cloudy bright-less sky, was enough to dampen her already broken spirit.

Wait, what about her studies? Was she doing fairly well? Or did she actually drop out in the end? Yes, she did “good”. And that was just it. They were not excellent. They were not above average. They were just “okay”. She was devastated. So used to being the star, she plummeted down as if gravity despised her. But she hardly gave up. She worked hard, tears and disappointments became her best friends, and she misses home every second of the day. At the end of the day, she actually pulled through. In the land of America, she learned things the hard way. Even though her performances were not the handsomest of results, she was proud of herself. She would never go through and experience all the thunders if she were to stay back home.

A thousand more things have happened to our little fading star, but it would take a whole novel to write each of them down. As an end for this short story, be happy that our star is finding her way back to the sky, twinkling, little by little.